

Stow Town Meeting Information for Press

This document is to assist members of the press who attend a Stow Town Meeting.

Attending

- Everyone who attends Town Meeting, both voters and non-voters, must first check into the meeting. The checkers are usually at tables in the Hale Middle School cafeteria.
- While we encourage press and visitors to attend Town Meeting, please note it is a legislative session of the town and not a traditional “open meeting” or “public forum”. Non-voters may only attend in the meeting hall(s) with permission of the Moderator.
- Non-voter members of the press are usually allowed into the meeting auditorium before the meeting starts. You must sit in the designated nonvoter section for press.
- You must identify yourself as a reporter by display of credentials if requested to do so by the checkers, Moderator, Town Clerk, or their staff.

Photography and video recording

- Photography or video recording during the meeting must be approved by the Moderator, unless you simply plan to take images or video of the front of the hall - presentations, town officials, etc. - from your seat.
- Even with permission, distracting speakers during the meeting with lights, noisy cameras, and other activities is generally not appropriate, and may cause the Moderator (or his/her designee) to tell you to stop or to leave the auditorium.
- Taking images of voters is never allowed during any vote or count. This does not include the front of the auditorium; you may always take images of public officials at the front of the hall – the Selectmen, Finance Committee, Moderator, etc.- during a vote or any other time.

Questions about Town Meeting

- If you have questions about process, procedures or the content of the meeting, feel free to approach the Moderator or other town officials before or after the meeting. During the meeting there is usually an assistant or deputy Moderator in the front row of the center section who may be able to help you.
- General information about Stow town meeting is available on the town web site at www.stow-ma.gov under “Town Meeting and election”, especially the Town Meeting Handbook.
- As stated above, please note that a Town Meeting is a session of the town’s legislature and not an “open meeting”, “public hearing” or some other kind of open public forum. Town Meetings are subject to their own state laws and not the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. Under the US 1st amendment, a legislative Town Meeting is not a public forum - for example, see the 2007 US 1st Circuit Court of Appeals decision *Curnin vs. Town of Egremont*.

David E. Walrath
Moderator, Town of Stow
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